

Kokoon Arts Club collection

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Ingalls Library and Museum Archives
11150 East Blvd.
Cleveland, OH, 44106
216-707-2492
archives2@clevelandart.org

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Summary Information

Repository	Ingalls Library and Museum Archives
Creator	Kokoon Arts Club (Cleveland, Ohio).
Title	Kokoon Arts Club collection
Date [inclusive]	1919-1952
Extent	0.33 Cubic feet One container
Language	English

Preferred Citation note

The Cleveland Museum of Art Archives, Kokoon Arts Klub, date and short description of document [i.e. Application form of Raymond Sommer, 1925].

Biographical/Historical note

The artistic tradition in Cleveland at the beginning of the twentieth century was one of traditionalism. Art groups such as the “Old Bohemians” and Brush and Palette Club had been in existence since the mid nineteenth century. Traditional art schools were also well established. The Cleveland Academy of Art was founded in 1881, teaching classes in the city hall attic. The Western Reserve School of Design for Women (founded 1882) became the Cleveland School of Art and is today the renowned Cleveland Institute of Art.

However, change was in the wind. Cleveland’s working industrial and commercial artists, by day laboring lithographers and engravers, had trained under modernist European artists. Carl Moellman, an ardent disciple of Robert Henri, a leader of the Ashcan School of American realism, wanted to promote Henri’s loose and free style. His friend and fellow artist, William Sommer, was in his post-impressionistic period of painting. Together these two men experienced an artistic awakening both through their training, exposure to American modernists, and through the experience of New York City nightlife, particularly at the famous Kit Kat Club. Modernism was also creeping into Cleveland with exhibitions of Cubist art at the William Taylor & Son Company art gallery. Moellman and Sommer decided to form a new club of Cleveland artists where modern energy and free spirit reigned.

The club’s founding members were employees of the Otis Lithograph Company. They produced a large volume of theatrical lithography for Otis, including posters for motion pictures and sensational magic productions. The new club, the Kokoon Arts Klub, whose name reflected this new artistic awakening, had not only a sense of modernism, but also a theatrical flair provoked by the new media and also visiting troupes such as the Ballet Russe that performed Stravinsky’s Firebird in 1913. The club first met in the interior design studio of Louis Rorimer. By 1911, the artists had a rented building on East 36th Street. It is said that Moellman chose the name, but watercolorist Joseph Garramone invented the crazy spelling of the Kokoon Arts Klub. Activities included evening lectures on a wide variety of topic, art instruction, and two annual exhibitions. An art auction to support the club’s artist members took place each December. A local reporter described their work as “revolutionary, purposeful and distinctly unique.”

The Kokoon artists had trouble affording rent and heat for their club, and dreamed of a warm studio with leather couches at an upscale location. It was with this dream in mind that in 1919 the members decided to give a ball. With a dance permit from city hall and a location secured (the Elks Club on Huron Road) the members worked for weeks creating decorations and costumes. The annual Kokoon Bal Masque was born. The balls became an annual sensation, and except for the cancellation of 1923, continued until 1938. The artwork, costumes, posters and invitations they produced are included in many public and private collections in the Cleveland area. Though risqué and wild, the balls became the cause celeb for the Kokoon Club

Kokoon artists contributed to Cleveland’s national reputation in the arts. Many were long time May Show artists at the Cleveland Museum of Art. The Great Depression and war created a new economic reality for artists, many of whom moved to New York and other larger cities in order to make a living at their craft. With dwindling membership, the Kokoon Arts Klub disbanded in 1956.

Scope and Contents note

This small collection contains application forms dating from 1919 to 1952 along with a membership ledger from the 1940s and 1950s. Although not all club members are represented, It is useful for the study of the arts and artists in Cleveland in the 20th century and complements the small collection of records from the Cleveland Society of Artists, a rival arts club.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Ingalls Library and Museum Archives

Conditions Governing Access note

Open to the public. For more information or to access this collection contact archives staff at archives2@clevelandart.org.

Existence and Location of Copies note

Digital reproductions of portions of this collection are available electronically on the Cleveland Museum of Art Archives page of the Internet Archive at archive.org/details/kokoonclubapplications.

Controlled Access Headings

Subject(s)

- Art -- Societies, etc.
- Art, American -- Ohio -- Cleveland -- 20th century
- Kokoon Arts Club (Cleveland, Ohio)

Applications for Membership

Collection Inventory

Applications for Membership 1919-1952	Box 1	Folder 1	Box 2	Folder 2
1919				
Bandlow, August Charles				
Buchwald, Richard				
Eastman, William J.				
Eisfeller, Earl				
English, Herbert C.				
Grauer, William C.				
Haefele, Burrill Viall				
Jicha, Joseph W.				
Kaufman, E.				
Klopp, T. Harry				

1920

Roberts, James F.

Trouth, Edward

Ulsh, Don V.

1920

Brown, David Scott

Heiterpreim, Paul

Jarm, William F.

Lee, H.J.

Scott, Walt

Smith, Roland

Vacek, Carl E.

1921

Dickert, Ignatius E.

1922

Nelson, William S.

Schoeffman, Max

1922

Konersman, Robert

Rettig, George

1923

Anderson, John

Brooks, Arthur D.

Clinker, L.C.

Davis, Edward Raymon

Dimski, Henry C.

Haefele, Burrill Viall

MacDowell, A.H.

1924

Peebles, Hugh

Smith, George Arthur

Tanga, Carmello(?)

Wiel, Sigurd

1924

Buser, Louis

Hein, William A.

Holcomb, Delorma B.

Noyes, Edward A.

Prettyman, Clyde

Rodems, Ivan H.

Smagola, John

Winslow, Morton G.

1925

1925

Butler, Murray Bliss

Hart, Lester C.

Jex, Gordon A.

Mayer, Frank

Schatz, Rudolph A.

Sommer, Raymond

Tilgner, Arthur

Wolfe, Robert E.

1926

Due, Stephen

1927

Haude, Oscar

1928

Kray, J.L.

Sarlay, Laszlo

1928

Boersig, Joseph A.

Horton, Frank

Jensen, Max (?)

Johns, Ivor G.

Steinman, John Ernest

1929

Adomatis, George F.

Binder, Carl F.

Probala, Andrew W.

Smagola, John

1930

Terr, Joseph

Wing, Clarence G.

1930

Blass, Gustav H.

Hagemann, Warren

Haupt, William R.

Hunter, Anthony M.

Keisogloff, Peter

Pempin, Edward T.

Schauer, Joseph

Schuldt, Ira T.

Snayder, Rudolph A.

Stein, Leo

Toothaker, Victor

1931

Volper, I.

1931

Davis, Benton

Gross, Paul B.

Holmes, Noel

Jarm, William F.

Patterson, W.N.

1932

Coyle, Dean G.

Dohanos, Stevan

Kirby, Neil

McCann, Charles L.

Perkin, A.J.

1933

1933

Noeder, Willard(?)

Nowako, Leo(?)

Smith, Dean

1934

Horsfall, Albert(?)

Munkachy, Elmer

Richardson, Ralph M.

1935

Davis, Joseph A.

Kanaval, Stephen W.

Unknown [Panloer, El A.?]

1936

1937

Gordon, Kenneth

Henke, Gustav A.

Jacobsson, Axel T.

Munch, Andrew A.

Rappaport, Maurice I.

Schlensker, Henry G.

Vacek, Carl E.

Unkown [Guisseyler, Harry R.?]

1937

Lustig, Edward J.(?)

Prince, John, Jr.

1938

Horowitz, Irwin L.

1939

Kanaval, Stephen W.

Morgan, Elved T.

Smagola, Steve

1939

Chenney, Stanley J.

Jilek, Joseph J.

Kubala, John

Lebovitz, Benjamin G.

Papenbrock, Andrew

Suvak, John

1940

Davis, Hilary

Dick, Albert

1941

Dommin, Leonard A.

Eppolito, Frank J.

Fraxine, Keith

Lewandowski, Joseph

Molnar, Emery R.

Parsons, William G.

Schiewe, Edward

Schutpelz, Chester C.

Wesley, Frank A.

1941

Feind, Adolph A.

Kopacka, R.

Neeb, Adam

Schumann, Floyd G.

1942

1942

Lackmeyer, Albert M.

1943

Schubert, Frederick Christian

Siegried, Leroy S.

1944

Davis, Joseph

Saubermann, Paul L.

Unknown [(?), Richard F.]

1945

Mintz, William M.

Patterson, William D.

Schulz, Eric E.

1946

1946

Danaman, James P., Jr.

Guarniri, Angelo

Hubka, Rudolph Peter

Kelly, Gilbert Orlando

Komocki, Stanley J.

Lunte, Willard M.

McCarlis, Edward

Price, Eugene D.

Reimer, Charles

1947

Ackerman, Charles

Carlgren, Gustave

1948

Filisko, Joe

Ford, Bryce F.

Gavrilla, Jon

Kuthy, Joseph M.

La Quatra, John

Unknown [Iannidogo, Vern?]

1948

Falberth, Fred G.(?)

Goolewski, Marion

Jewell, Larry

Karnosh, Donald A.

Keil, Tom

Krnc, Albin John

Kus, Edward J.

1949

Laws, Walter H.

Sheridan, Tinker

Smith, Edward

1949

Emery, Thomas P.

Fahnle, William

Helyer, John S.

Johnquest, Merritt

Kinder, Harold A.

Macron, Fred K.

Mernone, Arthur F.

O'Brien, H. Alton

Peders, Dan

Salen, George E.

1950

Unger, John

Zenone, Vincent

1950

Bender, Wayne

Binz, Ellsworth E.

Fitzgerald, Frank

Frazine, Keith

Hackett, Jim H., Jr.

Harm, Ray

Hodges, Ralph A.

Lavelle, Thomas William

McGavin, Vince

Schmidt, Walter A.

Sekelsky, John T.

1951

1951

Barrie, Donald

Borovy, Arthur

Boughton, Kenneth

Bucur, Nicholas A.

Hinkle, Ed

James, Herb

Kuthy, Joseph M.

Leach, Joseph B.

McMillan, Carl P.

Patterson, W. David

Treon, Ray, Jr.

Walsh, Edward John

Williams, Robert

1952

1952

Behm, Paul

Cousino, Fred C.

Davis, Joseph A.

Dittebrand, Howard

Emery, Thomas P.

Enwell, Jack N.

James, Herbert

Janiak, Chuck

Juhasz, Joseph

Kovach, Julius

Lynch, James

Nielsen, Frank R.

Prasser, A.F.

Undated

Tinman, George

Titzler, Henry

Unknown [Chapian, Greg Hoosep?]

Undated

Burrell, Dwight

Samson, M.W.

Membership Ledger 1940s-1950s	Box	Folder
	1	3